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THE ALLIANCE OF CHURCH AND STATE,
AN ANCIENT POLITICAL ENGINE,

A
DISCOURSE.

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THE
GOLDEN CALVES
OF
DAN and BETHEL:

OR, THE
ALLIANCE OF CHURCH AND STATE,
AN ANCIENT POLITICAL ENGINE.

A DISCOURSE
DELIVERED AT KILBRIDE ON THURSDAY THE 26TH
OF FEBRUARY, 1795.

By JAMES SMITH, V. D. M.

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1795.

THE GOLDEN AGE

OF

DAVID BRIDGES

OF THE



BY

DAVID BRIDGES

DAVID BRIDGES

OF THE

BRITISH MUSEUM

OF THE

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE FRIENDS
OF
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THE ALLIANCE OF CHURCH AND STATE, &c.

A

DISCOURSE.

1 Kings xii. 26, 27, 28, 29.

AND JEROBOAM SAID IN HIS HEART, NOW SHALL THE KINGDOM RETURN TO THE HOUSE OF DAVID: IF THIS PEOPLE GO UP TO DO SACRIFICE IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD AT JERUSALEM, THEN SHALL THE HEART OF THE PEOPLE TURN AGAIN UNTO THEIR LORD, EVEN UNTO REHOBAM KING OF JUDAH, AND THEY SHALL KILL ME, AND GO AGAIN TO REHOBAM KING OF JUDAH. WHEREUPON THE KING TOOK COUNSEL, AND MADE TWO CALVES OF GOLD, AND SAID UNTO THEM, IT IS TOO MUCH FOR YOU TO GO UP TO JERUSALEM: BEHOLD THY GODS, O ISRAEL, WHICH BROUGHT THEE UP OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT. AND HE SET THE ONE IN BETHEL, AND THE OTHER PUT HE IN DAN.

THE revolt of the ten tribes forms a remarkable epoch in the history of the Jewish nation. The history of this revolt may be easily recited, and the recital may serve to introduce us to the subject we mean to discuss from this text.

On the death of Solomon, (the crown being hereditary) Rehoboam his son succeeded to the throne. On his accession, the people, who had long groaned under an enormous and insupportable load of taxation and servitude, thought of asserting their rights, and of making some vigorous efforts to regain their long lost liberties. In this important enterprize they employ Jeroboam the son of Nebat as their leader. Under his conduct they approach the throne in a dutiful and respectful manner, complaining of their grievances, and praying for redress ; at the same time promising all loyal submission and obedience. Their complaint and petition in the sacred records run thus : *Thy father made our yoke grievous, now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.* The young prince not deeming it prudent, either to grant or to refuse the prayer of the petition at the time, dismisses them with the promise of an answer three days after. In the interim he advises with his privy council. The old members, taught by experience, and knowing the temper of the people, with great political wisdom advise him to follow gentle and lenient measures, and to flatter rather than threaten, judging this the best and most effectual way of securing the loyalty of the people. *They spake unto him saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and will serve them, and answer them, and speak good words unto them, then they will be thy servants for ever.* This advice, however salutary, was rather mortifying to the pride of the new-made monarch, whose education naturally led him to form high ideas of the prerogative of the crown : he therefore rejects it with disdain as being inconsistent

with his royal dignity, and represents the matter to his young ministers who had been educated along with him at the effeminate and debauched court of Solomon his father, and who were just as high-blooded and headstrong fools as himself. They dictate an answer worthy of themselves, and which they saw, from the trim he was in, would please the king their master. They advise him to maintain his royal authority with firmness, to guard against every invasion of his prerogative, and therefore to speak to these discontented murmurers in the tremendous tone of majesty, and say, *My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins, and now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke, my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.* At the time appointed, the people return for an answer to their petition. Rehoboam now swelled with such big ideas of his princely greatness, with all the heaven and earth-provoking insolence of a despot, echoes the answer put into his mouth by his young and headstrong counsellors. One proof out of many, that kings and courtiers are not secure from infatuation, but may be the cause of their own destruction; that by their despotic conduct they may urge the people to throw off that burden which they will not lighten, and that by refusing a proper reform they may thereby only accelerate all the horrors and desolations * of a re-

* What an earthquake is in the natural world, that is a revolution in the political. So in scripture the former is used as the natural emblem of the latter. The figure is built upon a strict resemblance. They operate in a similar way, and produce similar effects of tumult and desolation. Every revolution is more or less attended for a time with outrage and bloodshed. In the history of the

volution. In the present instance, an injured and oppressed people, galled with their yoke, and irritated by the insolent answer they had received, rise indignant, and publicly refuse subjection to their haughty and imperious lord. *When all Israel, says the sacred historian, saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, what portion have we in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse; to your tents, O Israel, now see to thine own house David. So Israel departed unto their tents.*—The revolt was almost universal: no less than ten tribes out of twelve rise in a mass, and withdraw their allegiance from Rehoboam, tho' he had come to the throne by regular succession. Yet, what a pity! not sufficiently instructed in the knowledge of their rights, ignorant of the principles of liberty, that first and fundamental human blessing, they foolishly subjugate themselves to Jeroboam the son of Nebat; and so, they do not at all meliorate their condition, but only exchange the yoke of one tyrant for that of another. For the history of the world evinces, that to make a man a tyrant, no more is necessary than to put *too much* power into his hands. The son of Nebat when raised to the throne acted just like the most of crowned heads—cheated his people—drained their purses—and shed their blood. So we read in the sacred history, *That there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days.* Jeroboam was undoubtedly a man of great political talents, that

revolt we find that Adoram, one of the first officers of state, perished by the hands of an enraged populace, and that they would have inflicted awful vengeance on the sacred person of his majesty, had he not by good luck got into his carriage, and sped his way to Jerusalem. 1 Kings xii. 18.

is, he was well qualified to deceive the people, and provide for himself. A remarkable instance of his political chicanery is that recorded in the verses we have selected for the subject of this discourse—his interweaving religion with politics—forming an alliance between the church and the state, and managing that alliance as a grand political engine: In this, I say, he displays the acuteness of his political genius, which has received the honourable suffrage of almost all his sceptered brethren in every age, who have been servile imitators of his example.

Jerusalem being the seat of all the solemn worship of the God of Israel, and the common residence of the Jewish kings, this sly politician foresaw, that if the people went thither to worship, they might soon come to be alienated from him; and from a predilection for their religion, be induced to go back to Rehoboam. To provide against this danger, he falls upon this ingenious expedient—to frame a new religious service for his subjects. As he saw he was not able to build a house of equal splendor and magnificence with the temple at Jerusalem, and being properly aware of the great proneness of the people to idolatry; he therefore abolishes the old religion, discards the priests and Levites, establishes a new ritual, institutes a new order of priesthood; and manages the whole with such skill and address as not to offend, but to please the people.—Their history sufficiently evinces their great fondness for the golden calves of Dan and Bethel.—By this device he put a bit in the mouths of his subjects, which he could manage in such a manner as to enable himself to keep the saddle. Mild and merciful monarch; who for the convenience and good of his people wreaths the chains of slavery around their necks! Good and pious prince, who

is so tenderly concerned for their spiritual welfare! at once the father of his people, and the guardian of religion!—The purity of his motives is sufficiently discovered in our text, *Jeroboam said in his heart, now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: if this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of the people turn again unto their Lord, even unto Rehoboam, king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, it is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.* It is as plain as words can make it, that Jeroboam's whole design in attending to religion at all, was to use it as an engine of state; and if the wise man's observation be just, *That as in water face answereth to face, so doth the heart of man to man,* his conduct will go a good way to explain the conduct of *some* other princely patrons of religion, and will furnish us with a key to unlock the arcana of church and state. But some may be ready to censure the preacher for want of candour. It will be objected—that the unworthiness of Jeroboam's motives will neither prove such alliances to be wrong, nor the supporters of them to be influenced by improper or sinister motives. I will allow the objection its full force; yet I apprehend it is not so strong but it may be combated: For if it can be shewn, that church and state are two distinct societies which cannot be blended without prejudice both to the civil and the religious interests of mankind, and,—if certain orders of men have a *peculiar* interest in their alliance: I say, if these things can be demonstrated to be true, it will follow, that the motives of these interested supporters can-

not be very pure or worthy: even that charity which thinketh no evil cannot help suspecting them to be somewhat similar to the motives which actuated the king of Israel in erecting the golden calves.

We are to be occupied then in the sequel with examining the evidence of the truth of these two propositions:

I. That church and state are two distinct societies which cannot be blended without prejudice both to the civil and religious interests of mankind.

II. That certain orders of men have a *peculiar* interest in their alliance.

That church and state agree in the general abstract idea of society is at once admitted, but their agreement in any other thing is denied. They agree in genus, but not in species.—Their prominent features of discrimination may be traced in the following things: their origin—their members—their government—their ends of erection.

I. Their origin is different. The one is heavenly, the other earthly; this is human, that is divine.

Man being constituted not a solitary, but a social being, is fitted by the social affections of his nature for the social state. A state of solitude is equally uncomfortable and unprofitable to man. In regard both of pleasure and profit, it is not good for him to be alone. As his social nature inclines him, so his wants impel him to enter into society. The interest of society immediately creates the necessity of government. For example—A number of persons

occupying a certain territory favourable to their commerce with one another, for their common good, enter into a civil association, and as the foundation of that association, form a social compact, whereby they agree to throw all their civil rights into one common stock; to reduce their notions of equity into laws or social regulations, and to appoint proper officers to execute these for the public good,—the great and only end of the association. This is the origin of civil government as founded on natural, wise, and just principles. In the social state government is absolutely necessary. Without it the ends of association could not be attained. Yet it is merely a human device, and why should it claim any higher original, since it is a matter to which the wisdom of man guided by the dictates of conscience is fully competent? Scripture traces it to no higher source, calling it expressly man's ordinance. *

* *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.* *κτὶς ἀρχῆς.*—Human creation, ordinance or institution—meaning, civil government. Such exhortations as this of Peter to the strangers scattered abroad were very necessary and proper. As the Christians were generally calumniated by their enemies as being seditious and levelers, or turners of the world upside down, to wipe away this reproach, or to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men who traduced them in this manner; it was the more necessary, that they should demonstrate by their conduct, that they were good and peaceable citizens. A contrary conduct, as it was contrary to the spirit of their religion, so it would have been a just reproach unto it. Therefore the apostle exhorts them to submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. The apostles considered Christians and heathens as on a level as members of civil society: and therefore that Christians had no right to claim any superiority, to form factions in the state, or to resist that government which was acquiesced in by their fellow-citi-

The origin of the Christian church is very different. According to the memorable declaration of its great Founder, the good confession which Jesus witnessed before Pontius Pilate, it is a *kingdom not of this world*. By which we cannot understand less than this, that it differs in kind from every species of civil society. It is also frequently styled the kingdom of heaven, for this reason I suppose among others, because its origin is heavenly. The plan of it was laid by infinite wisdom, and was given to be executed by the Messiah. God having at sundry times, and in divers manners, spoken unto the fathers by the prophets in the last days spake unto us by his own Son from heaven, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds. By him God erected the Christian church according to the eternal model in his own divine mind.—So widely do church and state differ as to their origin, the one being of divine, the other of human institution.

2. Their members are different. Men as men, are members of the one. Men, not as men, but as Christians, are the only members of the other. All who either explicitly, or tacitly, agree with the foundation of the association, and submit themselves to it, are members of civil society. But it is only the faithful in Christ Jesus who are or can be the members of his church. The difference of the two

zens. As the converts from Judaism still retained, in some measure, their national prejudices, such exhortations to civil subjection were peculiarly necessary for them. Had these things been properly attended unto, the doctrine of passive obedience, and non-resistance to tyranny, would surely have never been built on these apostolic exhortations.

societies in this respect arises from the difference between men considered as men, and men considered as Christians. Who will say that the heathens, contemporary with the primitive Christians, were not members of civil society? yet as long as they continued in their state of heathenism, they neither were nor could be considered as members of Christian society.—The difference of the members clearly argues the difference of the societies.

3. Their government is different. I mean not to enter into any political discussion of the various forms of human government: that is foreign to my present purpose. I only make this general observation, that the law of nature is the only proper rule of government. The laws of every well governed state, are only the modifications of that law which is written on the hearts of all men. They are the applications of nature's general law of right to the particular exigencies, and the varying circumstances of civil society. Were it otherwise government could not be the common privilege of mankind; no other law than this being universal. But this is a law which reaches equally unto all, and can be excepted against by none. It is adequate to all the purposes of civil government, and when faithfully followed never fails of proving a faithful guide.

The government of the Christian church is very different. The key is laid on the shoulder of Messiah, who is head over all things to the church. This his political body is governed by his peculiar laws, and positive institutions recorded in the sacred volume. Therefore the church is said to be built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. Revealed truth, the written word, which contains

the laws and institutions of Christ, is the rule by which his church is governed: and surely that man forfeits all title to the honourable name of Christian, who on any pretence whatever, would justify the least wilful deviation from this rule, and substitute human authority in its place, call it Popish, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, or by any other term of political or clerical imposition. The blessed author of Christianity has taken care to guard against such an invasion of his prerogative and the rights of his disciples, by establishing it as a perpetual law, that no one that is called by his name shall at any time claim a legislative authority in his church.

Matth. xxiii. 8. Be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren; and call no man your father upon the earth, for one is your father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called master, for one is your master, even Christ.

It would indeed be an intolerable bondage to have conscience in subjection to poor erring mortals; but it is the high privilege of Christ's servants, that they acknowledge no other Lord but himself, and have an unalienable right to search the records of his will every one for himself, as being amenable only to him, the king of Zion and ruler in Israel.—

Thus the difference of their government furnishes us with another convincing argument that the kingdom of Christ and the kingdoms of this world are essentially different. I observed,

4. That the ends of their erection are different. The end of civil government is to secure the rights, the liberty the property, the order, the peace and temporal prosperity of the community. The public good, the common interest, is the end of the association, and consequently ought to be the ob-

ject of that government which is instituted in order to the attaining that end.

Though Christianity does by no means oppose, yet it does not pursue the ends of civil associations. The end it pursues is far higher, the glory or proclamation of the honours of the blessed God in the salvation of men; in redeeming, in calling, in justifying, in sanctifying, and in training them up in a meetness for a glorious and blessed immortality. The design of God in the erection of the Christian church, was, that all those whom he hath predestinated to the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ, might enjoy the means of obtaining the inheritance which is reserved in heaven for them. It was for the gathering together all things in Christ; for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till they all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. In one word, it was for the great and godlike purpose of bringing many sons unto glory, thereby illustrating and glorifying the character of the universal Parent.

Thus from this short review it appears that Messiah's kingdom differs essentially from the kingdoms of the world in its origin, members, government, and ends of erection. This being the case, it follows, that it cannot admit of incorporation with any civil society or political association.—The church is catholic, composed of all the faithful in Christ Jesus scattered abroad over the face of the earth; of the redeemed out of every kindred, tribe and nation; of all who in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus out of a pure heart, and love him in sincerity and truth. These, and these only, are the children of the kingdom, and are all

brethren, however they may be distinguished from one another by birth, language, complexion, education, station, local situation, or other accidental circumstances. This is the church of Christ; and its catholic nature shews at first view that it cannot be thrown into any national or provincial mould. Yet in nations where the Christian religion has been generally professed, princes and states have thought proper to interpose their authority, by attempting to give it a civil establishment, which it is not capable of receiving. For what in effect have these boasted guardians of religion, and affectionate nurses of the church established; or can they establish, that is, in force by their authority? Not the original plan of that grace which hath appeared unto men bringing salvation; that must stand on the basis of divine institution, and its own intrinsic excellence; and it is calculated to be the religion of every man for himself voluntarily chosen and voluntarily professed, on which its whole value and efficacy depend; not to be the religion of civil communities, as such, and enforced by their authority, for they are not capable of it. But on examination it will be found that the civil powers (while they pretended to establish Christianity) have only established peculiar forms of professions, and particular sects of professing Christians, giving them an outward sanction, and granting them certain exclusive civil privileges, and when thus imbodied nick-naming them the church. The church by law established! What a pompous title! What a glorious privilege! How secure are they who are within her consecrated pale! High is their dignity. They are the *best* citizens, and the *only* Christians! Worthy therefore of the civil patronage they receive. Their creed, their ritual, their understandings, their wills, their

consciences, are all stamped with the great seal of civil authority! They have surely reason to rejoice that they are authorized to be Christians, and that they have received a patent which warrants them to worship their Maker! Oh the blasphemy! Oh the daring impiety!

From the catholic nature of Christ's kingdom it appears that it cannot be incorporated with the kingdoms of this world. It cannot be incorporated as a whole, and if it cannot be incorporated as a whole, it cannot be incorporated at all. It cannot be incorporated in parts, for it is one and indivisible. Its external and visible unity indeed may be broken. It is broken by every incorporation. But its real, internal, and proper unity, cannot be broken, it is absolutely indissoluble. There is but one body, and one spirit, which animates all the members of that one body.—As the kingdom of Christ cannot be incorporated with the kingdoms of this world, so no particular sect of professing Christians can be incorporated without prejudice both to the religious and civil interests of mankind.

1. Incorporations are prejudicial to the religious interests of mankind.—By proposing motives foreign to religion, by annexing civil advantages to the chartered system, they tend to blind the understanding, pervert the judgment, bias the will, and bribe the conscience, and so to destroy the very essence of genuine religion. It is the peculiar glory and excellency of the Christian religion, by which it is distinguished from every false religion, that it solicits no foreign aid, that it proposes no worldly motives. Yea, it refuses all foreign assistance. It recommends itself. By the evidence of its truth, it gains access to the understanding: by the manifestation of its excellence and importance, it fastens

conviction upon the conscience, and in this rational and persuasive way, it reduces its subjects into a willing obedience to its laws. Hence says Paul, the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual, and mighty to the pulling down strong holds, casting down imaginations, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of the truth as it is in Jesus. He and his brethren preached in demonstration of the spirit and with power, because having renounced the hidden works of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, or handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth they commended themselves to every man's conscience as in the sight of God.—But incorporations commend themselves not to the consciences, but to the lusts and passions of their votaries—to their pride, their ambition and avarice.

Again—The incorporating system grossly misrepresents the religion of Jesus. It holds up a false mirror which mangles and distorts its every feature. It hides its virgin beauty by washing it over with the harlot's paint. A mercenary and jesuitical priesthood pronounce the form truly divine. The credulous multitude give implicit credit to their ghostly testimony.—It appears strange that so many who have the Bible in their hands should be so blindly attached to incorporated churches, but our wonder ceases when we consider, that from their earliest years they have been taught to imagine, that a church cannot have a proper existence without a civil charter. Notwithstanding the great progress of light and knowledge, this prejudice is still far from being removed. Even the boasted humility of presbytery has not been able to eradicate it. So gross is the superstition and so great are the prejudices of not a few, that they hesitate not to call the chartered

church their mother church. Even dissenters cannot help expressing their regard for her that bare them. It must be confessed that there is something very attracting in an incorporated church to one who is ignorant of the spiritual constitution and genius of Messiah's kingdom, and who derives his faith by inheritance from his father, or builds it upon a manufactured creed, the chief corner-stone of every incorporated church.

Once more—Incorporations create schisms. Every incorporation is a schism, as it makes every national church an independent detached part which can have no communion with other parts of the same body. They sow discord among those who otherwise are brethren, and quench the flame of that Christian charity which is the bond of perfectness.—Christians are all brethren, and on a perfect level as to the privileges of Christianity. But incorporations destroy this equality by exalting some above the rest. What is the natural tendency of this, but to obstruct their Christian fellowship, and to keep them from dwelling together in unity as brethren? As therefore every incorporated church is schismatical in its very constitution, every conscientious and enlightened Christian ought to withdraw, and will withdraw from their communion, as by continuing, they must continue supporters of schism. Mistake me not. It is not at all my intention to inveigh against individual members of national churches. I can allow them large discount for the prejudices of education. I can recognize them as Christians, though not as being incorporated. If they build their Christian character upon that foundation, I own them not as brethren, nor with them God's speed.—At the same time I hope I will get credit when I say that I am

not so partial to dissenters as to justify them in every thing. Their dissenting is right, provided they dissent upon just and Christian principles. But this I fear cannot be said of them all. While some dissent from principle, do not many dissent from spleen, whim and caprice? This is notorious, particularly in the case of parochial revolts. A person is presented to be their pastor, in whose nomination they have not been acknowledged.* Their pride rises, and they will not receive the base intruder. Do you ask their reasons for refusing him. They answer, because they have not had their choice. Right. Christians should not tamely submit to such servitude, but ought to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free. Christian societies have an undoubted right to chuse their own officers. But do dissenters always view the matter in this light, as a Christian right and privilege, and as a duty incumbent upon them to exercise that right? Do they feel the authority of Christ enjoining them to do so? Or, do they not rather often wish only to have their own will? They find fault with patronage, not on account of the thing, as subversive of the authority of Christ, but on account of the presentee or some circumstance in his nomination. So, not being able to get the object changed, they fly off in a fit of passion to a dissenting interest,—not that they may observe the institutions of Christ, having their consciences subjected to his authority—but that *they may have their own will*. They learn the particular shibboleth of the sect, and become clamorous partisans, and staunch in their cause till their will is crossed, when perhaps they run off to a new party, and set themselves to the learning a new shibboleth. Like the primitive partisans in the church of Corinth, they take their side, and rank themselves up under the banner of what

they think the most orthodox party, and now the most of their religion is made to consist in being able to contend for the faith by repeating the articles of a creed, a confession, or a testimony. Melancholy truth!—Yet all this mischief is ultimately to be charged to the account of the incorporating system, by which these very revolvers were taught at first to overlook the authority of Christ in his kingdom. *

Thus incorporations remove religion from its proper basis, misrepresent Christianity, supplant the authority of Christ, destroy Christian equality, extinguish brotherly love, and tear the church to pieces.

Tho' I think I have uttered nothing but the words of truth and soberness, I am not confident that they will reach conviction to the minds, or shut the mouths of the abettors of incorporations. Strong is the power of prejudice, and difficult to be conquered even by an ingenuous mind. It is often proof against the fairest and most solid reasoning. But as facts are stubborn things, which speak for themselves, and are not easily contradicted, I would ask the advocates of incorporations this plain question—What was the

* It is the great error of almost all dissenting bodies, that in the formation of their churches they do not search the sacred records to see the plan of the primitive churches; but make the national churches from which they secede, their grand model, with the exception of those things in them which they have felt as grievances. So not tracing up the effects to their proper cause, they make the matter but little better. It is a patched work at the very best, and every now and then must get a new clouting.—Men can do nothing to the purpose either in political or religious reformation till they recur to first principles, and pay little attention to established systems, even tho' they may have been reared by the wisdom, and cemented by the blood of their fathers. Men as rational creatures ought to think, and enquire, and judge, and act for themselves.

reason that during the three first centuries, when Christianity was without any kind of civil establishment, that it not only existed, but flourished and triumphed : but immediately upon its receiving an establishment from Constantine, that it declined, so that it has never yet recovered its pristine glory? Let incorporators answer the question fairly, and I leave them to make the best shift they can to defend their system. * I said

2d. That incorporations are prejudicial to the civil interests of society.

The political system, wherein the church and state are blended in one constitution, being built on a foundation different from that on which civil society rests, must be prejudicial to its interests. By requiring more than is necessary to answer the ends of civil association, it so far defeats these ends. By invading the rights of conscience, which is subject only to God, it provokes resistance, and thereby tends to disturb the peace of society.—Conscience must be exempted from human jurisdiction, because its ends, offices and interests in our nature are superior to all the ends of civil association, and subjecting it to the power of man, is inconsistent with the very being of religion. When therefore civil government intermeddles with conscience, it goes out of its own sphere, and pursues what is alien to the ends of its institution; of consequence it does what tends to un-

* The history of every incorporated church, even those distinguished for the greatest orthodoxy and soundness, proves that the declension of Christianity, upon its receiving a civil establishment from Constantine, was not an accidental thing. It has been uniformly the case.—And this uniformity naturally leads us to consider the incorporating principle as the cause.

hinge itself. The truth of this observation is amply confirmed and illustrated by the histories of all nations where church and state have been blended in one constitution. They have been split into religious factions, which by their contentions have rent mighty empires asunder, demolished thrones, dis-jointed governments, bathed the sword of persecution in the blood of the righteous, and carried desolation thro' the earth. The history of our own country can well attest the melancholy truth. Yet after all these mournful and dear bought lessons the system still remains. One class of citizens, because they cannot make conscience truckle to state priest-craft, are robbed of their just rights: while another class, who make no bones of swallowing the incorporated creed, are allowed to fatten on the spoils of the other.—Invidious distinction! Baneful effect of this antichristian system! In the name of common honesty why should there be such unjust partiality? Ought not equally worthy and virtuous citizens to be equally protected and countenanced? Be wise, O ye kings, and be instructed ye judges of the earth. It is your office to do justice.—Not to bear the sword in vain, but to be a terror to evil doers, and the praise of such as do well. All who fulfil their civil obligations to society are entitled to your protection and encouragement: but remember, that God only is lord of the conscience, and that he says to all who would invade his prerogative, *Vengeance is mine and I will repay.*

Since the alliance of church and state is an institution so prejudicial to the civil and religious interests of society, it is somewhat strange that it should have such a firm and permanent establishment. It may be asked, How is it supported? The answer to this question naturally leads us to our

Second proposition—That certain orders of men have a *peculiar* interest in their alliance.

I highly approve of David's resolution, and reckon it worthy of universal imitation, *I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked is before me*: yet though it should give partial offence, I frankly confess that the venerable and deified characters I have in my eye are—the prince and the priest. Now the crown may happen to precede the mitre; then the mitre may precede the crown; but which precedes, the prince or the priest, the alliance is the same, formed and maintained for the same ends, and productive of the same effects. The copartnership is carried on for their joint interest, and each by performing his proper part necessarily promotes the common good. To use a trite and homely phrase, the trade is carried on by working to one another's hands. The prince commands his subjects under the pain of civil penalties and forfeitures to hearken to the priest. The priest in return preaches subjection to the prince under pain of ecclesiastical, and it is well if not of, eternal damnation. The prince is all religion. The priest is all loyalty.—The nation is involved in war.—The prince proclaims a fast.—The priest re-echoes his cordial amen; implores the God of battles to crown the heads of the royal army in the day of battle; lectures his flock on the head of subjection to the powers that be, and strives to dragoon recruits into the service by his pulpit harangues, or to cajole them into it with the promise of using his interest for them at a throne of grace!—In reward of such important services to the state, the prince, ever ready to mark and faithful to reward sterling merit, secures the faithful priest in his tithes or stipend; perhaps grants an augmentation, or re-

moves him to another part of his Lord's vineyard, where the sphere of his usefulness may be more extensive!—But to be serious.—By means of the alliance, the despot finds he is better able to swell the prerogative of the crown, and ecclesiastics find they are better able to glut their avarice and ambition. They have the same object in view—to enrich themselves with the spoils of the people. According to contract, the priest helps the prince to collect his taxes: and the prince helps the priest to collect his tythes.—Taxes and tythes!—these are the things which cement this blessed alliance. But while civil government and religion are thus prostituted to the vile designs of ambitious princes and of aspiring priests, the real ends of both are defeated; the civil and religious interests of society are ruined; all that is dear to man as a social being is gone; and he has himself to thank for it in allowing himself to be duped by the gracious alliance of church and state.

From the evidence that has been adduced, of church and state being distinct, and of the interest which prince and priest have in their alliance, common sense is at no loss to draw the inference—I hat the same motives influence them in supporting it, which actuated Jeroboam the son of Nebat, when he set up the golden calves of Dan and Bethel. *It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem:* this was the pretext. But the true reason was, lest by going to Jerusalem, they should have returned to Rehoboam king of Judah.—This, say the alliansers, is the best form of government, on which wisdom has expended all her stores.—This is the purest religion, the very religion of Jesus; your civil and religious interests are united in one constitution, and it is not good for you, O people, that

it should be otherwise. Plausible pretext! Ingenious device! But let not moderns appropriate the whole glory to themselves: let a just tribute be paid to the memory of Jeroboam to whom they are indebted for such a glorious precedent. *And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: if this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of the people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.*

What reason have the friends of human nature to weep for its degradation, when they behold the nations falling down and worshipping the calves! Must they not devoutly wish, and fervently pray that the cursed alliance were broken, and that the miserable captives were delivered, that so the civil empire of man, and the religious empire of God might be established in the earth. Then might we expect to see the heathen deities bow at the feet of Jesus of Nazareth, the koran drop from the hand of the false prophet; and the scattered sons of Abraham collected to the standard of him whom their ancestors rejected with sovereign contempt. Then would wars cease unto the ends of the earth—the sword be beaten into the plough-share, and the spear into the pruning-hook. The envy of Ephraim would depart, and the adversaries of Judah be cut off; Ephraim would not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim: but liberty, knowledge, righteousness and happiness reigning universal and triumphant in the earth, the church of God in one grand chorus

would shout and sing, Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

The signs of the times portend not a little; and such as are careful in discerning them cannot but see the finger of God in them. "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders. He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the water-springs into dry ground: a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water-springs, and there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation; and sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase. He bletheth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly, and suffereth not their cattle to decrease. Again they are diminished and brought low, through oppression, affliction, and sorrow. He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way. Yet he setteth the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock. The righteous shall see it and rejoice; and all iniquity shall stop her mouth. Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord."—The storm may be very furious. Despots may combine and fight it out to the last. "But the Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. The world shall be established that it shall not be moved, he shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad, let the sea roar and the fulness thereof, let the field be joyful and all that

is therein: Then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord, for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth; he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.”
—“ Amen, even so come Lord Jesus !”

In conclusion—Let us be careful, my friends, to approve ourselves good and worthy citizens by yielding due obedience to lawful authority, and by contributing to the support of regular government. Regarding magistrates as God’s ministers in the civil department, let us be faithful in rendering to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour. Let us also be no less careful to approve ourselves genuine Christians, by a strict and conscientious regard to the authority of Jesus Christ, and by walking in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord, blameless. In one word—While we endeavour to fill up our present stations with fidelity, with propriety, with usefulness; let us at the same time give all diligence to make our calling and election sure, that so in due time an entrance may be ministred unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

F I N I S.

